



Is Your Organization Ready for *The COFI Way*?

In our more than 25 years of experience, we've found that there are key readiness factors that position organizations for successful implementation of [*The COFI Way*](#), a family focused parent leadership and organizing model.

We encourage organizations to lay a strong foundation for implementation by:

- **Ensuring there is support within your organization for building the power and voice of parents.** This support should be broadly shared by the board, staff, and stakeholders and should be documented in strategic plans, mission statements, and other organizational materials.
- **Dedicating staff time to the organizing project.** This includes hiring a skilled organizer to lead the project and providing the organizer with adequate training, supervision, and support. It also means having a plan for how the organizing project will fit into the rest of your organization's activities. We estimate that it takes one full-time organizer to support three to four parent teams or issue campaigns.
- **Making an initial commitment of three years to this work.** *The COFI Way* is a three-phase model that is implemented over multiple years. Organizations will need to make an up-front commitment to the organizing process for at least three years, with the potential for longer-term support.
- **Securing the funding that is needed to support implementation.** This includes three years of funding for the organizer's position, training and coaching from COFI (if desired), and other project costs. If securing multi-year funding up front isn't realistic, you can plan for raising the funding over time. In our experience, once the parent team is up and running and impacting change, it is easier to gain renewal and new funding.
- **Developing your recruitment plan for engaging parents in the organizing project.** Your organization should have a track record of building trusting relationships in the community and a clear idea about which parents you want to involve and how you will make connections with them.

- **Being willing to share power with parent leaders and support the priorities and plans that emerge from the parent organizing.** This includes embracing the role of parents as genuine partners in decision-making and priority-setting in your organization and knowing that having parents at organizational decision-making tables will change the culture of your organization.
- **Committing to sustain the work over time.** Your organization should be prepared to work with parents and partners to support the ongoing leadership and organizing work that emerges from this project once the initial funding or contract for the project has ended. Parent organizing does not have an endpoint. Parents have a right to continue to be heard and to continue building power – including taking advantage of opportunities to network and build power with parents beyond your organization.
- **Making a commitment to changing the culture.** Adding new people to the mix who are outside your norm will change the way things get done. You can't control it, but you need to expect it and be open and willing to change how you do business. This is the work of centering the voices of parents.



Parent leaders are at the center of a powerful and quickly growing movement for economic and racial justice – and we invite you to *join us!*

Contact:

[COFI Center For Action and Learning](#)

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